



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

MUHLENBERG EDUCATOR NAMED SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – A Muhlenberg County educator is the Kentucky Special Education Teacher of the Year.

The Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) named Kelly Teague, a special education teacher at Muhlenberg North Middle School as the recipient of this year's award.

Teague has been a special education teacher for 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grades in both resource and co-teaching settings in Muhlenberg County schools since 2009. She serves on the Special Education Advisory Council, is a sponsor for the Beta Club and is a member of the Special Education Professional Learning Community at Muhlenberg North Middle School.

Teague's passion is to help students develop much needed social and communication skills. She implemented the Peer Buddy Program in order to meet the needs of students in her classroom.

"When teams come together to plan and implement ideas to assist students in socialization and communication, it can have a ripple effect, creating a positive environment for all students, and an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding and learning," Teague said.

In addition to her school activities, Teague is a board member of the Nothing is Wasted Ministries, a non-profit mission devoted to improving education to orphans in Haiti, and a member of the Muhlenberg Community Theatre Inc.

The Kentucky Special Education Teacher of the Year receives a \$500 monetary award and a gift basket.

Two finalists for the award, listed below, each receive a gift basket and a monetary award of \$250.

- Bridget Arnett is a special education teacher at Grapevine Elementary in the Hopkins County school district. Arnett has served on the Tier 1 Core Team for Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports for her school and has provided a host of professional development to school faculty, future teachers and district staff. She serves on the Program Review Arts and Humanities Committee, the Curriculum Committee and the Extended School Services committee. Also, she serves on the Family Resource and Youth Services Center Advisory Council, where she assists with home visits and fundraising activities. She is the founder and sponsor of the Cool CATS Club for 4th- and 5th-grade students with special needs. These students commit to community service and schoolwide supports. The Cool CATS run several school-based businesses and donate the proceeds to community service projects.

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- Dana Roney is a special education teacher at Green Co. High School in the Green Co. school district. Roney was a high school teacher for students with Learning and Behavior Disabilities (LBD) before her current position of PASS (Positive Approach to Student Success) coach for at-risk students with behavior challenges. She is a member of the Green County High School school-based council, an FCA sponsor, and a member of the school GRIT team. Roney credits her ability to make a connection with her students for the success she has achieved. “I find out their interests are, then learn everything I can about them. After I make the connection, I concentrate on the academic content,” she said.

Each year, the Kentucky CEC and KDE partner to give the Special Education Teacher of the Year Awards.

Applicants must be nominated by their district director of special education. CEC and KDE staff score applications according to a rubric, and the applicants with the top three highest scores are selected as finalists. CEC and KDE staff conduct onsite visits to the teacher’s school and select the final winner.

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